

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

L-03 H-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

AID-05 EB-07 COM-02 AGR-05 OMB-01 /095 W

----- 027017

R 270700Z SEP 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3595

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0823

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECON PINS ET

SUBJECT: FOOD SHORTAGES AS EPMG WEAPON IN ERITREA

REF: ASMARA 791 (DTG 171205Z SEP 75)

1. RUMORS HAVE BEEN WIDESPREAD FOR SEVERAL WEEKS IN ASMARA THAT EPMG AUTHORITIES INTEND TO INTENSIFY THEIR CONTROL OVER PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD IN ERITREA, INCLUDING BURNING OF CROPS IN FIELD BEFORE HARVEST, IN ORDER TO DENY THIS RESOURCE TO INSURGENTS.

2. SINCE JULY 23 EPMG MILITARY AUTHORITIES HAVE STRICTLY CONTROLLED LAND TRANSPORTATION THROUGHOUT ERITREA, PERMITTING TRANSPORT OF FOOD IN AND OUT OF ASMARA ONLY VIA ADI UGRI
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ROAD. ON SEPT. 17 THE EPMG INITIATED PROGRAM OF FOOD

RATIONING INCLUDING WHEAT, SORGHUM, TEFF AND SUGAR. IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT RATIONING IS LESS RESULT OF FOOD SHORTAGE THAN OF EPMG DESIRE TO CONTROL DISTRIBUTION.

3. RUMORS ARE WIDESPREAD THAT, AS FOOD SHORTAGES BECOME CRITICAL JUST PRIOR TO OCT-NOV HARVEST, ETHIOPIAN TROOPS WILL BURN HARVESTS IN THE FIELD TO FURTHER CRIPPLE FRONT MILITARY CAPABILITY IN ERITREA. AS CONFIRMATION OF THIS INTENTION, ERITREANS CITE ANNOUNCEMENT ON BROADCASTS BOTH SEPT. 22 AND 23 OVER RADIO ASMARA WHICH WARNED ERITREAN POPULACE TO BEWARE OF " BANDITS" WEARING UNIFORMS OF EPMG TROOPS WHO INTEND TO BURN CROPS IN THE FIELD. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS WIDELY BELIEVED TO REPRESENT CLEAR THREAT BY EPMG TO USE FOOD SHORTAGES, WHICH COULD EASILY REACH STARVATION LEVEL, AS MEASURE TO SUPPRESS FRONT ACTIVITIES. ERITREAN FEARS ARE HEIGHTENED BY REPORTS THAT SINCE SEPT. 21, EPMG TROOPS HAVE BEEN BURNING CROPS ALONG KEREN ROAD. THIS ACTION, HOWEVER, IS DIRECT RETALIATION FOR FRONT ATTACK ON EPMG CONVOY SEPT. 17 AND 18.
SHERRY

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Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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06 JUL 2006

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